

**HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
SEPTEMBER 24, 2007 – 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Ben Moore, Chairman
Bill Lally, Vice Chairman
James Workman
Virginia Bridle-Russell
Rick Griffin
Fred Welch, Town Manager
Maureen Duffy, Administrative Assistant

REGRETS:

The Selectmen had a non-meeting with legal counsel at 6:45 p.m.

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced those in attendance.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mrs. Bridle-Russell announced the Second Annual James House Apple/Pear/Blueberry Cook-Off. It will be held on October 13 at the James House. Entry forms are available at the Lane Library, the North Hampton Library and the Hampton Town Office at the public announcement counter. Recipes must have apples, pears and/or blueberries as the predominate ingredient. Proceeds will be used to fund the James House restoration projects and its' programs.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell also announced the Hampton Night Celebration for all the shops downtown this Wednesday, September 26 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Mr. Lally said that the Fall & Winter newsletter with activity listings is available at the Hampton Parks & Recreation Department.

Chairman Moore thanked Plan New Hampshire for making the Charrette last Friday and Saturday (September 21 & 22) a great success. It was an informative session where skilled Charrette professionals observed Hampton municipal structures and property to develop an effective future plan. Mr. Moore reported that the Charrette and Natural Outreach Coalition (NROC) meetings will be rebroadcast this Saturday, September 29 starting at 8:20 a.m. Chairman Moore reminded residents that the final NROC meeting will be this Wednesday, September 26 starting at 7 p.m. at the Hampton Academy.

Mr. Moore announced the Public Information Session regarding the reconstruction of the Seashell Stage. The meeting will be held at the Hampton Police Station this Thursday, September 27 starting at 7 p.m. The Department of Resources and Economic Development are arranging the meeting. Mr. Moore also announced a public Flu Shot Clinic on Thursday, October 4 starting at 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. In addition, Chairman Moore noted that citizens who signed the Climate Change Resolution Warrant Article last year can expect a call from him personally to see if they are willing to serve on the Energy Committee.

PUBLIC HEARING

To accept funding from the New Hampshire Department of State – Vital Records Preservation Grant Program for New Hampshire City & Town Clerks in the amount of \$10,000.

Town Clerk Jane Cypher explained that Hampton was one of 148 communities within New Hampshire that applied to participate for up to \$10,000 from the Vital Records Improvement Fund. The assessment has already occurred which cost \$1,964. Based on the recommendations of the assessment report, additional funds (\$8,036) are available to cover the cost of shelving, conservation and microfilming Hampton's vital records.

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED to accept funding in the amount of \$10,000 from the New Hampshire Department of State – Vital Records Preservation Grant Program for the Hampton Town Clerk's office. **Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

II. APPOINTMENTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR JOHN HANGEN – UPDATE

Director Hangen reported that the Public Works Department is working on replacing the sewer mains and services on Tobey Street.

If the \$350,000 road warrant article is passed in 2008 the Department is hoping to continue working on sewer and drainage replacements on Tobey Street and Gray Avenue.

Mr. Hangen is looking forward to Phase III of the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The work should start this fall.

Mr. Hangen reported that the Public Works Department budget is in very good condition. He is always concerned about the latter part of the budget as it is difficult to determine what the actual volume of rubbish will be.

Director Hangen provided handouts to the Selectmen on bid proposals for sewer and drain projects. The drain line runs through Tuck Field to Winnacunnet Road. The drainage project goes by Centre School to the baseball fields to Park Avenue. The drainage system is being upgraded from 24 inches to 30. The sewer project is on Locke Road toward Sanborn Road. Bids will be opened this Wednesday, September 26.

SELECTMEN'S RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Chairman Moore asked about bronze signs versus green signs. He has received complaints that the bronze signs are difficult to read and wondered if the green and bronze sign could be posted on the same sign. Mr. Welch noted that there are brackets that are pole mountable and that perhaps one could be put on the post.

Mr. Moore also asked about the traffic lights at the intersection of High Street and Lafayette Road. A citizen had voiced their concerns to him about the left hand turn signal being confusing from High Street onto Lafayette. Mr. Welch reported that the Fire Department has already assessed the traffic light regarding this issue.

III. MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

The minutes of September 17, 2007 stand as distributed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Welch noted that the second meeting sponsored by the Conservation Commission on "Dealing with Growth in Hampton" will be held on Wednesday, September 26, 2007 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Hampton Middle School.

Town Manager Welch reminded residents that the State Department of Transportation will be continuing hearings on the 2009-2018 State Highway Plans at the Portsmouth City Council Chambers on September 26 at 7 p.m. and at Salem High School on September 27 at 7 p.m.. These are the last two hearings in Rockingham County.

The Hampton Rotary Golf Tourney will be held on Monday, October 1, 2007 at the Wentworth By The Sea Country Club starting at 1:30 p.m.

November 14, 2007 is the last day to make deposits for the Recreation Department trip of the Canadian Rockies by Rail that departs on April 14, 2008.

The Annual Wally's Pub Pig Roast and Bike Run are scheduled for October 7, 2007.

Widow Fletcher's Tavern will be holding their block party on September 30 from 2 to 8 p.m.

Mr. Welch noted that individuals wishing to submit petitioned warrant articles for a zoning ordinance, building code or historic district code articles must do so between November 12 and December 12.

Regular petitioned warrant articles for all other subjects may be submitted at any time up to January 8, 2008.

SELECTMEN'S RESPONSE TO THE TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mrs. Bridle-Russell requested that the dates be posted on Channel 22 regarding the deadline to submit petitioned warrant articles for a zoning ordinance, building code or historic district code.

2. BENCH REQUEST

Attorney Gearreald addressed the Board. The bench located at the Mill Road water tower location was removed during the summer months by Public Works due to its dilapidated state. In July, the Selectmen received communication from Mrs. Stickney expressing her interest in donating a new bench to the Town in tribute to her late husband.

It is anticipated that the costs for the bench will be less than \$500; not meriting a public hearing to accept.

Attorney Gearreald has been corresponding with Aquarion Water Company regarding the placement of the bench as it was originally believed to be on their property. Aquarion Water is planning on building a new water tank at the Mill Road location but is more than willing to cooperate with the new bench placement.

After researching the appropriate documents Attorney Gearreald has determined that several feet from the sidewalk is public property and recommended placing the bench within this area.

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED to accept the donation of a bench from Mrs. Stickney and have it placed on Town property located at that Mill Road water tower. **Mr. Workman SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Chairman Moore thanked Mrs. Stickney for her generosity.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. BUDGET – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Lipe addressed the Board. The Chief said that he instructed the individuals who are most affected by the proposed elimination of the Deputy Chief positions to not attend tonight's meeting. He said that the presented budget has been cut by \$105,000 by the Town Manager.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell asked for an explanation from the Town Manager regarding the proposal to eliminate the two positions. Mr. Welch discussed the budgeting process and that he carefully analyzed the organizational structure of the Fire Department and came to the conclusion that there is a need for at least four additional firefighters. Mr. Welch determined that he was not able to substantiate the continuation of the two Deputy Chief positions. He also noted that these positions would then be bumped by union contract to a Captain or Lieutenant position. Mr. Welch felt that the real need was to put firefighters / EMT's on the street. Mr. Welch reminded the Board that on September 10th the Board discussed the need for at least four firefighters and the Safer Program. The Program would consist of a 50/50 match and would allow the Town over a period of five years to work into hiring firefighters on a permanent basis. If desired by the Selectmen this funding program could be considered as a warrant article that could be presented to the voters for consideration.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell asked to have the current and proposed organizational charts clarified. Mr. Welch said that the current organizational structure of the Fire Department has the Fire Chief in command of the entire Department. Directly under the Chief, is the Secretary, Prevention Officer, the Fire Prevention Secretary and the Fire Inspector. Further down the line are the Deputy Chief of Operations and Deputy Chief of Safety & Training. The Deputy Chiefs are responsible for the various Captains, Lieutenants and station organizations including the Fire Alarm Operator and the two stations. The chart has also been divided by stations.

Mr. Welch explained that the reorganization would take out the two Deputy Chiefs and there would be direct supervision from the Fire Chief to the command structure of the Captains, Lieutenants and then to the operational personnel.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell noted that currently there are 11 administrative officers to 24 firefighters and in the proposed adjustment there would be nine administrative to 24 firefighters or 28 if the proposed warrant article for the Safer program was approved. Mr. Welch confirmed her statement as correct.

Mr. Workman asked when the additional four firefighters would start assuming the warrant article was approved. Mr. Welch said that the best case scenario would be late fall of 2008. He also noted that it would depend on when the Safer Program would start. In addition, he also pointed out that the Town would be eligible for 50% reimbursement and that it would decrease over four years until the total cost was assumed by the Town.

Mr. Workman noted that there is a 9 to 24 ratio in the Police Department. He also asked where the Deputy Chief functions would be distributed to. Mr. Welch explained that the Chief would be required to rewrite the job descriptions and redistribute tasks and duties.

Mr. Griffin commended all staff working on obtaining funding from the Safer Program. He believes that it is time to do something drastic and time to do something new that the voters will approve. Mr. Welch said that his decision to eliminate the two Deputy Chief positions was not an easy one.

Mr. Lally asked if the two Deputies could keep jobs as Captains. Mr. Welch noted that the union contract has bump down provisions. He explained that the Deputies would be bumped down to a Captain level and the two Captains would be bumped down to Lieutenants. There is currently one firefighter vacancy. Mr. Welch explained that there is currently no provision to bump to a different union.

Chief Lipe disagreed with the Town Manager's explanation of how the union contract bumping would occur. He explained that it is based on seniority and that the Deputy would bump a Captain and the Captain would bump a Lieutenant. One of the Lieutenants would then bump the Fire Inspector who would then be released from duty. The other position would also bump a Lieutenant who would bump the Fire Department Secretary. There are no bump back provisions between the two unions.

Mr. Lally said that he likes the job that the Town Manager is doing but does not agree with him on the proposed elimination of positions. He also pointed out that Mr. Welch is doing exactly what the Selectmen have asked him to do regarding the budget. Mr. Lally also said that he is not keen on hiring personnel through warrant articles. Chairman Moore pointed out that the Safer Program is strictly for funding and not for hiring purposes.

Mr. Welch said that there is no way to know how the bumping would go. It can be anyone in the management organization which includes the Deputy Chiefs, the Secretary, the Fire Prevention Officer and Secretary, the Fire Inspector, the Captains and Lieutenants.

Mr. Lally voiced his concern that laying personnel off is not a good message to send to all employees.

Mr. Moore noted that the Selectmen sent a clear message to the Town Manager that they wanted a budget that would be accepted by the voters. He also pointed out that the proposed budget is smaller than next year's default budget.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell does not understand how letting go of the two Deputy Chief positions will bump the Fire Prevention Secretary. Chief Lipe responded by saying that the part-time Fire Prevention Secretary would not be bumped it would be the full-time Secretary to the Fire Department as she is the newest member to the 3017 Union. It was noted that individuals who are bumping other positions must be qualified to do the position. Chief Lipe also pointed out that there is a large pay discrepancy as well. Mrs. Bridle-Russell asked if there was an Emergency Medical Officer position if it could be taken out of the ambulance revenue fund.

Mr. Welch discussed the recent arbitration case that was won. As a result of this case, it was agreed that each position is a classification so when bumping occurs it is done by classification. Chief Lipe said that the

arbitrator's decision gave Deputy Chief as one classification and that seniority was not followed. The Town Manager said that bumping down can happen anywhere as long as it is within the same classification.

Chief Lipe asked the Selectmen to be careful of rearranging the personnel structure of the Department.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell asked where the \$105,000 would come from to fund the Deputy Chief positions if the Fire Department structure was to remain as is.

Mr. Griffin believes that something has to be done to adjust the budget. He thinks that the Town Manager has worked hard on the proposed budget and that the Selectmen should support his decisions. He agrees with Mr. Welch and that extra firefighters are needed. In addition, he believes that changes are needed now so that major adjustments do not have to be made at a later date.

Mr. Lally finds it hard to believe that \$105,000 cannot be found to maintain the Deputy Chief positions.

Chief Lipe discussed overtime. The policy for Hampton has been to cover "man for man". He mentioned at last week's meeting that this policy may need to change as soon as October 1. Chief Lipe presented a "Timeline of a Fire Department Response to an Incident of Cardiac Arrest" and a "Timeline of a Fire Department Response to a Structure Fire". The Chief noted that overtime is controlled by union contracts and by the Chief. The two sheets represented the need for speedy recovery times as it takes eight minutes for a biological death to occur with a cardiac arrest as well as for flashover with a structural fire. Chief Lipe reported that Hampton emergency crews have a response rate between one to eight minutes. When there is a shortage of personnel the Department backfills so that the response time saves lives and structures. Chairman Moore asked if eliminating the Deputy positions would affect the response times. Chief Lipe said that it is tough to say because the Deputies respond to any call at any given point in time. They work four days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Deputies do make a difference to the safe operations of the Department and are needed on the scene of an emergency.

The Town Manager responded by saying that he does not believe that anything else could have been cut from the budget and that the final resort was to cut personnel. Mr. Welch was faced with decisions such as a need for a new four inch hose and a need for turnout gear for the firefighters. There are two first line pumpers that also need to be replaced and are not in this budget as it is likely to be a warrant article.

Mr. Griffin asked how common it is to have firefighters out on workers compensation. Chief Lipe reported that injuries have been excessive this year. Usually there is one person out on workers compensation, however this year there have been four people out on long-term disability (over 30 days). One employee has been out for almost a year, the others between four to six months. Those people were replaced by long-term sick time with four more people.

Mr. Griffin asked if vacation time in the summer affects overtime costs. Chief Lipe believes that vacation time is split out evenly over the year.

Chief Lipe said that he can budget according to the last eight year trend. The risk of coming down is when the unknown happens and the Department is caught short. To remain within the 2007 operating budget it is likely that the Department will have to run short. Chief Lipe said that if the Selectmen are interested in setting the policy to run short then the Department will do so. According to the Chief, approximately \$100,000 could be cut from the 2008 budget by not filling shifts. Chief Lipe said that the Town Manager is correct; the Town needs firefighters on the street.

The historical trend from 1987 (when the Town added firefighters) strongly indicates that there will be an increase in demand for service in 2010. More calls mean more overtime and the arbitrator's decision dictates that the Town is required to provide call back service. Chief Lipe stated that the Department needs to meet the demands of the Town.

Chairman Moore asked about the volume of calls. He said that from the provided information it appears that there are 13 calls a day or 100 calls a week. To Mr. Moore this call level does not appear to cause a great demand on the Department. Chief Lipe said that in a perfect world where calls could be scheduled that would be correct. The fire engine is sent for advanced life-support and the third person off the pumper does the protocols that could make a difference to the patient. The Chief said that the Department cannot handle it all the time and that is why there is mutual aid. Mr. Moore said that perhaps an augmented shift may help. Chief Lipe said that they never know when the calls are coming in and it is difficult to predict the number of staff required.

Mr. Lally suggested that perhaps items such as the hose could be warrant articles.

It was the consensus of the Board to have the Town Manager meet with the Fire Chief tomorrow to re-evaluate the budget.

It was noted that taxpayers are most concerned about the bottom-line figure and their taxes.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell said that citizens want the bottom-line of the operating budget reduced and that perhaps the overtime policies need to be changed. People are always complaining about overtime expense and that perhaps it is time to make some policy changes.

Chairman Moore noted that if the Deputy positions are to be included in the budget then benefits need to be figured at a cost of \$150,000 rather than \$105,000.

The Fire Department budget will be reviewed again next Monday, October 1 with the proposed amendments.

The Selectmen reviewed the remaining Fire Department budget.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Moore announced that there will be a Public Hearing in the Selectmen's meeting room on Friday, September 28 starting at 7 p.m. regarding the proposed increase in toll road fees.

Mr. Griffin asked if the Town Manager learned more about the pedestrian accident yesterday along Ocean Boulevard. Mr. Welch said that there was a pedestrian accident involving a motor vehicle. Apparently the mirror of the vehicle struck the pedestrian. According to the Police Chief, bright sunlight impaired the driver's vision. Mr. Griffin expressed his concern about traffic and the crosswalk situation along Ocean Boulevard.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Outdoor Food Event Permission – EMG3
2. Senior Seminar Fundraising Event – Car Show
3. Raffle Permits

Mrs. Bridle-Russell MOTIONED to approve the consent agenda as presented. **Mr. Lally SECONDED.**
VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

VII PUBLIC COMMENTS

William (Skip) Sullivan (12 Colonial Circle) is very familiar with the organizational structure of the Hampton Fire Department as he was the Fire Chief a few years ago. Mr. Sullivan emphasized the need for the two Deputy Fire Chief positions to maintain high quality effective administration within the Fire Department. He believes that the Department would be in danger of collapsing if these positions were to be eliminated. He noted that the fire service staffing is right where it should be according to national standards. Mr. Sullivan said that he is hopeful that the money can be found to keep these positions.

Mary-Louise Woolsey (148 Little River Road) expressed her concerns as a taxpayer. She believes that the Fire Department is of the greatest concern regarding the 2008 budget. Mrs. Woolsey said that citizens are worried about their overall fiscal situation and do consider the bottom-line of the Town's budget. Many residents believe that taxes are too high and have generated a great deal of financial discomfort for many people. Mrs. Woolsey believes that the staffing levels are broken at the Fire Department. She would like to see more firefighters on the ground. Mrs. Woolsey also pointed out that inadequate fire support will affect the ISO rating causing property insurance policies to increase. Mrs. Woolsey believes that more discussion is needed regarding the Fire Department's budget as she thinks it would be a disaster to remove the two Deputy Chief positions. She questioned overtime in the Fire Department and is interested in hearing what policy changes the Chief may propose.

VIII. CLOSING COMMENTS:

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Bridle-Russell MOTIONED to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. **Mr. Lally SECONDED.**
VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Chairman